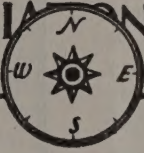


Miss Gammery

The COMPASS

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS



February 1940

Cleveland Interpretation

I'd Rather Be Right

Rural Plus

Social Workers in the Census

Work on Civil Service Examinations

Volume XXI

Number 5

DOUBTLESS there are still Clevelanders who dismiss the recent relief "crisis" as a political shenanigan between Cleveland's mayor and Ohio's governor. This belief is fostered by the technique of fixing blame rather than facing facts. Involve all your public in a search for answers to politically-framed questions and facts will be forgotten in hot debates about such brutal niceties as the precise point at which chronic hunger comes to merit the designation of starvation. Divide your public by partisanship for one political group as against another and even the possessors of facts may be frightened off their ground by a confusing political battle. The Cleveland Chapter had to jump these shrewdly constructed hurdles as well as others with which social workers are familiar. The purveyors of facts cannot always be expected to be popular with all the contestants in this sort of political battle but even politicians recover more easily from anger than the unfed from starvation. Elizabeth Magee, reporting for the Cleveland Chapter its activity in the situation described in the January COMPASS as "The Cleveland Relief Crisis," begins her article with the three questions which members of the Chapter had to answer before they, as "a very small part of the electorate," could make their politically-inconvenient facts reach the front page.

FOR several years social work has been going through the throes of adjusting itself to new environment and conditions, each time questioning the relation between what it already knows and what it needs further to know to work in a new setting. Are we discovering that a new kind of social worker and another kind of education are needed in the rural setting or that our problem is that of distinguishing urban form from essential substance, and using freely what we already have of the latter? For example, the question as to whether a new brand of social work is required in the public assistance agencies is still far from being satisfactorily settled for there are those who believe that the "principles and methods of case work" cannot be divorced from the particular forms and services in which case work was originally developed. With questions like these in mind, Hazel Hendricks discusses differences between town and country.

Contents

Article	Page
On the Front Page.....	3
ELIZABETH MAGEE	
"I'd Rather Be Right" (Reprint).....	5
The Rural Plus in Social Work.....	6
HAZEL A. HENDRICKS	
Problems in the Examination Process...	8
Social Workers and the 1940 Census....	12
Notes about Chapters.....	14
Personnel Practices Committee Meeting.	15
White House Conference Reports.....	16
National Membership Committee.....	16
Nine Points on Interpretation of Social Work	16

THE COMPASS

Published monthly except September by
 AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS
 Publication office 374 Broadway, Albany, N. Y.
 Editorial and General office 130 East 22nd St.,
 New York, N. Y.

VOLUME XXI

NUMBER 5

Officers

Harry Greenstein, <i>Pres.</i>	Pierce Atwater, <i>3rd V-Pres.</i>
Grace L. Coyle, <i>1st V-Pres.</i>	Frederick I. Daniels, <i>Treas.</i>
Charlotte Carr, <i>2nd V-Pres.</i>	Savilla Millis Simons, <i>Sec.</i>
Walter West.....	<i>Executive Secretary</i>

Assistant Secretaries: Dorothy C. Kahn, Grace F. Marcus,
 Elisabeth Mills

THE COMPASS: Edited by the Staff

Entry as second-class matter at the post office at
 Albany, N. Y.

Acceptance for mailing at the special rate of postage pro-
 vided for in Section 1103, Act of October 3, 1917,
 authorized June 28, 1924

Subscription: Non-Members \$1.00 per annum. Subscription
 of members of the Association included in annual dues.

On the Front Page

By Elizabeth Magee

WHAT is the function of a professional organization of social workers in a relief crisis? Should social workers speak out, or should they get others to "front" for them? If they speak, will they hurt the cause or help it? These are a few of the questions which faced the Cleveland Chapter of the American Association of Social Workers during the time when Cleveland's relief crisis was national front page news. The Relief and Executive Committees had frequent meetings in the attempt to arrive at a plan. Out of much discussion this belief emerged: we had in our possession facts about what the crisis was doing to people, but the facts were not in such a form as to be effectively used; we would be dodging our collective responsibility if we did not make them usable. A call was sent out to Chapter members in different private social agencies, asking them to forward to the Relief Committee stories of the effect of the crisis on families and individuals of whom they had firsthand knowledge. The City Emergency Division of Charities and Relief, welcoming any help in the situation, gave names and addresses of a random selection of those cut off relief on November 15th. These were assigned to members for investigation. In a short time the committee found itself embarrassed by a wealth of material. What to do with it? A small group devoted a week-end to culling significant data, classifying, tabulating. Monday morning brought more cases, necessitating re-arrangement, more tabulating. A sizeable report began to emerge.

The County Welfare Levy election was approaching. Should the material be released in advance of the levy, in the name of the Association, or should we ask the Welfare Federation to publish it? Delay for the approval of another body would mean losing this chance to help the levy. Every day was important. Finally the decision was reached to release the report in the name of the Association and a press conference was arranged. We opened our papers on the release morning with some fear and trembling. What had they done with our report? There it was, *on the front page*, and on the front page of afternoon and evening papers, given adequate space and dignified treatment. Editorials followed. Columnists discussed it. Radio commentators took it up. Following are a few of the comments:

No person of civilized sensibilities can read unmoved the Cleveland social workers' report on more than 400 sample cases of human want during the recent so-called "relief crisis."

(Editorial)—Cleveland News

The social workers who made up the report on what the town's last relief crisis did to 374 cases painted the bold outlines of human suffering and privations.

They didn't bother to brush in the background of this picture—the deep grays and blacks formed cloud-like out of the statistics and personal histories.

But the background may be discerned, etched in little phrases of understatement and between the lines of the factual reports. These are the deep gray clouds of lost morale and the black ones of apathetic acceptance of a world in which future hope has all but vanished.

(Columnist)—Cleveland Press

It certainly was unsporting, to say the least, for the American Association of Social Workers to choose Christmas night to release its report showing there was plenty of suffering and hunger during the recent relief crisis. Imagine how it must have embarrassed those public officials who have been proclaiming far and wide that there was no starvation. Imagine how it must have annoyed those holier-than-thou folks who don't want "any more taxes on industry" and those downstaters who find it comparatively simple to fix up a good dinner any time by just killing a couple of their own chickens.

This report certainly cannot be charged up to politics . . . They were not grinding anyone's ax.

(Political Commentator)—

Cleveland Plain Dealer

Space forbids anything but a brief summary of the results of the investigation. Of the 219 cases reported from social agencies, a total of 98 were unemployable because of physical or mental illness, 66 had been laid off of WPA either because of the eighteen months requirement, or for other reasons. The refrain had run through the speeches of politicians that there was "no starvation." In more than half of the 219 families there was definite proof of inadequate food. This was particularly serious where special diets were necessary. Thirty of these families had been threatened with eviction. In 50 families, heat and gas for cooking were a problem. There was the usual overcrowding and doubling up. Inadequate clothing was specifically mentioned in 34 of the families. In 33 of the households children were out of school because of lack of clothing; in 13, because of lack of food. Teachers reported children who were listless in school, and a boy who was sick several days because of having nothing but tea for breakfast. The health problems reported by the Visiting Nurse Association and city doctors indicated

the bad effects of improper food and cold houses on children with colds; on tuberculosis patients unable to get the required diet; on nursing mothers; on cardiac cases. In only two of the 219 cases were any jobs secured. Food was supplied by neighbors a little farther away from the poverty line—the old story of the poor helping the poor. Recourse was had to begging and gathering discarded food from markets. Loss of morale, family friction, bitterness and resentment, together with apathy and threats of suicide and desertion, wove a pattern of distress.

No starvation?

The second section of the report treated one hundred and fifty-five cases in the random selection given by the City Department, chiefly single persons and childless couples. More than half were over forty-five years of age, one-third of them too sick or handicapped to work. Of this group six succeeded in getting jobs. Nearly all had suffered from inadequate food. Single men living in rooming houses existed on apples and coffee. To be sure, cornmeal and flour were available from surplus commodities, but how make use of these staples in a rooming house? All of these people lived in daily fear of eviction. Some landladies were kind and shared food. The makeshifts by which they managed to pull through are familiar to social workers but were news to the general public, suffer-

ing perhaps, from what Helen Cody Baker calls "hardening of sympathetic arteries." Commenting on the help given by neighbors and relatives, the report said: "Where these people were also on relief or WPA or have a meager income, suffering is spread rather than relieved."

The Chapter does not expect to stop with this report. Plans are under way for making contacts with community organizations, for a speakers' bureau, and a continuing effort to create more public understanding of the need for a permanent and decent relief program. Out of the experience has come new courage; courage, now that we have found our voice, to continue to use it. Our experience underlies the truth of Wayne McMillen's words in *Social Work Today* for January:

Social workers are in constant contact with the victims of social maladjustments. No group in society has a more direct opportunity to observe and evaluate the results of immature or oppressive social relationships. Such opportunities should not be wasted. With respect to many of the most exigent social problems, the social work group is the one best able to propose sound remedies and to back its proposals with well-documented evidence.

In these days of confusion, no light should be hid under a bushel. Social workers are numerically only a very small part of the electorate. The knowledge they have will influence the trend of events only to the extent that it is used to leaven the thinking of other groups. In a democratic society what the specialist knows must become to some degree a tenet of faith of the majority before results will ensue.

"A. A. S. W. Alert"

The current issue of *Washington News Letter on Social Legislation* contains the story of the veto of the Jenkins Bill. Under the heading quoted above it makes the following comment:

The phraseology of the President's veto message of January 24 has some significant similarities to a wire addressed to him on January 22 by Walter West which stated, "Appropriation to State of Ohio, as provided in Jenkins Bill H.R. 5118, before you for signature, would set a precedent which would impair the effectiveness of future co-operation between states and the federal government in any grant-in-aid program and would immediately destroy the vital powers of the Social Security Board in setting sound standards and in preventing exploitation of the important social services represented in the Security Act. Would urge therefore that you veto the bill."

Wires urging veto of the Jenkins bill were also received at the White House from

a number of influential Ohioans who believed the preservation of the integrity of the Social Security program was more important than \$1,338,000 for their state.

A National "Case Record"

The *Boston Globe* of December 28th in an editorial comment on the "staggering report" of the Cleveland relief crisis by the Cleveland Chapter states that "it is unpleasant to have to keep an index finger pointed at the shortcomings of any great American city or state when one is only too well aware that one's own has many requiring correction. But the city of Cleveland, whether justly or otherwise, has become as it were a national 'case record' in the matter of relief policies and their consequences. If it is kept in mind that the lesson should be read near at hand as well as afar off, the continued study of this 'case' may serve a useful end."

I'd Rather Be Right

By Samuel Grafton *

Mr. Grafton conducts a daily column in the *New York Post*, but went to Cleveland to report the human side of the relief crisis in December. His special articles were vivid reproductions of what he saw and heard. He tells here of a sequel—in which Miss Kahn, of the national staff, and the Cleveland Chapter had a part. Now go on with the story.—*Compass Editor*.

When a young woman came into my office a few days before Christmas, during the Ohio relief crisis, and gave me \$1,500 in cash to send "to the poor people in Cleveland," she and I sagely agreed we were not going to cut any professional social workers in on the thing. I had a wild idea of getting some Clevelanders with a passable reputation for honesty to ring doorbells in the slum districts and give the fund away in \$10 chunks. This would get the money directly to those who needed it, avoiding detours through card-index files.

My feeling was that \$1,500 would do little good in any case. It was a drop in the bucket, no more; small change in the big empty pocket of the crisis.

But in the end (and mostly because I wanted to have an accounting after it was all over) I asked Miss Dorothy Kahn of the American Association of Social Workers to help. It was quickly arranged that the Cleveland chapter of the association (Miss Florence M. Mason, chairman) should handle the distribution. But not a penny for expenses, remember. I was quite severe about that.

Miss Mason's report has come in. It is bulky. I have been circling around it for a day or so, hefting it and dipping into it. I am a little awed.

It turns out that the difference between the professional and the amateur in this field is as wide as in the playing of Beethoven quartets. Each dollar has been laid down patiently and skillfully, as in a game of cards with the high stakes of cold, hunger and tuberculosis hanging on false play.

It makes quite a situation: a big, rather dreary, cold city, in the grip of crisis, and a few earnest people in it suddenly equipped with \$1,500 and told to go out and do good. Which street corner are you going to start doing good at, and how much good will you do before moving on? The Cleveland social workers helped 138 families, but they played it close to their vests, dealing it out in fives

and tens, with their eye on something I had never thought about.

This was the notion of using each five or ten to effect some permanent improvement where possible. Eyeglasses, for example. I have never really understood eyeglasses before. When one is very poor and has bad eyes, broken spectacles may mean inability to take a job at, say, typing. Eight heads of families were fitted with glasses; in four cases these glasses saved jobs or made jobs possible. In one case only \$4 saved a job. Those \$4 will be having an effect months from now; saving the city many times \$4 in relief.

Gas was turned on again in three houses; at least two dozen post-tuberculars were saved from relapse by receiving needed food until the crisis ended; teeth, in five desperate cases, were fixed, averting serious illness; a pregnant woman will have a better baby because of a supply of milk. One outstanding case: A man of great obesity, in need of dispensary treatment, could not leave his house to get it because he had no trousers. But now the sum of \$3.50 saved his health by providing him with a pair of oversize pants so that he could get to his clinic.

The lack of \$3.50, then, can, in Ohio, force a man to meet up with ultimate, ludicrous tragedy, alone in a hall bedroom without his trousers. The price of a theatre seat can save a man's health, in Ohio. There is an important point buried in Miss Mason's report. The economy with which the social workers solved so many problems measures, on a fine scale, the soul of Ohio. If a few dollars could do so much in so many cases, what adjective do you apply to the State that withholds those few dollars?

I have not listed a hundred cases of simple starvation that were helped, because these are trite old stories and have no interesting details about trousers and spectacles and so on. But I am in a position to give Governor Bricker of Ohio a report on these, too, if he wants it.

* Reprinted by permission from the *New York Post* of January 30, 1940.

The Rural Plus in Social Work

By Hazel A. Hendricks, Field Consultant in
Child Welfare, Children's Bureau, U. S.
Department of Labor, Washington, D. C.

Mrs. Hendricks paints a vivid picture of the overwhelming task that falls to the lot of the social worker in the rural setting and furnishes further material for debate as to whether the differences in the demands upon rural and urban social workers are essentially differences of kind or of degree.

RURAL social work, until rather recently the Cinderella of social work has, it seems, emerged from the fireside to become the gay central figure of the ball. On every front the field of rural social work and training for rural social work are being discussed seriously. A healthy controversy is going on in regard to contrasts between the tasks of the rural worker and the urban worker. There is also a difference of opinion as to whether great distances and isolation are as typically rural as has been believed. Do country people differ in any way from city dwellers? Are all rural people strong individualists or is this a superstition? Can all rural people be lumped together—by occupation, characteristics, or cultural background? Is the trapper who lives alone in the woods more isolated than the maiden lady with seven dogs who lives alone in a rear apartment? Are problems different in city and country? Do rural problems belong in a separate category?

Differences of opinion are not limited to a comparison of urban and rural areas; there is variation also in regard to conditions in the rural field. One discussant believes that the field of rural social work is unique because of "(1) distances making for isolation; (2) the effect of restricted interests; (3) the absence of expert resources in the presence of emergencies; (4) the absence of modern conveniences." A second discussant finds "(1) great distances and isolation are no longer true of rural areas, thanks to modern methods of transportation, automobile, plane, and connections by wire; (2) cultural and educational opportunities are available through radio and movies; paved roads enable farm families to attend meetings of 4-H clubs and of various farm organizations for men and women; (3) farming communities now have available to them electricity and motorized equipment; mechanical aids are prevalent."

Actually, I suppose, there is no fundamental difference between human beings whether they live in rural or urban areas.

Also, the differences of opinions in regard to variation in rural areas are not absolute but depend upon the breadth of horizon of the discussant. Rural New Mexico and rural Vermont present widely different pictures.

Whether the rural field requires a readaptation of fundamental social work philosophy and techniques, whether it depends upon the selection of personnel, and whether a special type of training for rural workers must be developed is the current headache of federal, state, and local agencies, of schools of social work, state universities, and professional organizations. All of these are striving to determine the courses and the curricula that will be most useful in training the social worker for service in the rural areas. It is the purpose of this paper* to present briefly a candid-camera study of the field and its problems and to summarize the essential training and information which rural child-welfare workers have found they must have.

Rural social work is a special field with many problems peculiar to itself. The words "rural area" evoke a definite picture—but the details of the picture depend entirely upon the type of rural area. To one person it may mean corn fields marching to the horizon; to another, stony hillside lots, mean in yield and size; and to a third, a coal camp. It is obvious that in three such regions local problems differ widely.

Recent observations made in 47 states with child-welfare workers in local areas present an arresting picture. It may be interesting to note some of the conditions reported by workers in these states and then to sum up the findings as they relate to the training of the social worker in rural areas.

ANYONE who believes that the American frontier has vanished and that challenging pioneer days are ended should accompany one of these workers. In January 1939, he

* Given at the National Conference of Social Work, Buffalo, 1939, on the program of the Committee on Rural Social Work.

would have found, within 75 miles of a great northern metropolitan center, men "swapping wives for jackknives"; in another state, a county judge encouraging a mother to sell her four children for money to pay for her divorce; dependent boys under 10 years of age committed to a state reformatory as the only place for care; girls and boys of 4 to 16 cared for in county poor farms; children of 14 years and under in county jails; children separated for life without respect for family ties and placed with such little actual knowledge of the homes they were going into that sometimes they suffered from neglect, overwork, exploitation, and even actual abuse.

After the physical frontier of settlement has passed, many farms still remain isolated. They are found as tracts of cultivated land scattered through great cutover areas or rolling prairies. In western states the size of the ranch may be responsible for isolation. In isolated spots such as these there are children needing some type of service.

The territory covered by one child-welfare worker may cover as many as 27 counties. In one state the worker goes chiefly on mule back; in another, she "poles a boat" to the homes of some of her families; and recently a director of the child-welfare division of a state welfare department, submitting some photographic material, included a picture of a child-welfare worker crossing a deep gully on a log with the statement "log walking—a much-needed rural case-work technique." And workers in these areas are not assisted by drawing on community resources—there isn't any community.

We hear, sometimes, that radio, telephone, and good roads have eliminated distance, annihilated isolation. Child-welfare workers know better. Hundreds of homes visited by them are far from paved roads or well-kept highways. They are lucky if homes are on dirt roads and not on cart tracks impassable at times because of snow or flood or mud. In many states it is necessary to leave mule, boat, wagon, or car, and finish the trip on foot, wet and muddy to the knees.

To add to the isolation, rural-free-delivery routes are an impossibility where families are so scattered, and frequently children cannot go to school. Medical attendance is reduced to a minimum—the cost of the doctor's call is so great that it is delayed until the illness is far advanced. Most of the homes described have no telephones—distance makes the cost prohibitive. Even churches, shopping centers, places of amusement are pathetically few. In certain sections of two states solitary road-

houses or taverns are the only places where rural people may gather and mingle with others. Long hours and physical exertion required by farm work and the seasonal demands for specific schedules often preclude any recreation, either regular or impromptu.

Other factors than physical distance from neighbors tend to isolate families and communities. Among them are the cultural and social patterns, the rigid traditions and customs of immigrants who, even though they are of the second or third generation in America, do not speak English and do not mingle with Americans.

Groups like the Acadians—more commonly known as "Cagans"—of southwest Louisiana, a homogeneous people of French descent, resolutely resist the cultural influences of surrounding groups. The German-Russian groups of several middle western states have retained old customs and have successfully repelled outside influence. Elsewhere, Polish communities hold tenaciously to the ways and manners of their forefathers but have shown an interesting capacity for absorbing the extraneous population elements coming to them through intermarriage.

It is not only the foreign-born who present these rigid cultural patterns. In certain sections native Americans exhibit an inflexibility of religious belief and a community moralistic attitude and prejudice toward the ne'er-do-well, the unmarried mother, the child born out of wedlock, the alcoholic, and the child of the family "whose mother and grandmother before her were 'no 'count.'" In contrast, there are the apathetic attitude toward and community reluctance to take any definite action in situations where children are living in shocking surroundings and where appalling social conditions exist.

There are sections where children of 14 and 15 have never been to school. They live beyond the 3-mile limit of compulsory attendance; and there may not have been money enough to establish a school for them to attend, though one may have been recommended. And often, when such a school is opened for the three or four pupils available, the teacher is not much older than her oldest pupils and has had less than a high-school education. It is apparent that such a teacher is not capable of awakening or stimulating leadership or breadth of view when her background does not differ greatly from that of her pupils.

Consolidation of small schools has in some instances increased the problem of attendance. Snow is seldom ploughed out of side

(Continued on page 16)

Problems in the Examination Process

This staff memorandum which was discussed by the National Committee on Personnel Practices at its January meeting presents a tentative and preliminary review of problems and questions which have been revealed through previous experience with the examination process. It is offered as background material for use by chapters and members working on these problems. Also suggested are a few of the points on which study may furnish needed data and experience.

THE Personnel Amendment, accelerating the increase in the number of social work positions being brought under merit system administration, comes at a time when the professional group is still at an experimental stage in examining for social work positions. What we believe should be tested is not clear. Different examination forms have not been validated. Still uncertain is the appropriate role of the professional group with respect to the formulation and administration of examinations, and the problems in examining for social work which social workers should define as within their province are not thoroughly clarified. Nor have we defined and acquired knowledge of the technical and administrative problems peculiar to the personnel agency's functions which must be taken into account.

Experience with selection methods has been accumulating within the Association as chapters have been requested to assist civil service commissions and personnel agencies. Much of our effort remains on a trial and error basis and our suggestions have appeared to personnel administrators sometimes as impractical and difficult to administer. Some of the criticism of professional efforts has been due also to developments in the personnel field itself—the increased need for this type of work, uncertainties and differences of opinion about methods, wide variations in present practice, confusion about social work's relation to personnel administration, and a tendency to disregard the need for knowledge of content of the specific field. Undoubtedly as our understanding of the problems which personnel administrators feel grows, cooperation between them and the AASW will be improved and extended. Recent establishment of the position of senior examiner in social work in the United States Civil Service Commission on a par with other professions will do much to fortify the role of the professional group in developing and administering selection methods for social work positions.

Problems in Different Types of Examinations

Several different types of examinations are being applied to social work at the present time, some as parts in a total process, others as the total process. There are no known reliable data on the comparative values of the different forms nor can it be assumed that trial of all possible forms or adaptations of forms has been made. To a large extent, therefore, questions and problems which have arisen are attributable to a lack of sufficient evidence and experience.

Although this discussion is limited primarily to consideration of problems in different types of examinations, there are other factors in the selection process which have a direct bearing on the effectiveness of an examination. Essential is a sound job description which outlines the duties and responsibilities for which competence is to be tested. There are special problems in the grading process which is too often separated from the process of formulation of an examination. Also essential is reliable use of the results of the examination process by the employing agency.

The Short-answer or Objective Test

Growing emphasis is being placed on the values of examinations made up of true-false, multiple-choice, and completion questions and exclusive use of them. Some test experts consider them the only truly accurate form of testing. These forms acquire added value because they are said to be more easily, inexpensively and uniformly administered. Because the right answers cannot be disputed, they minimize the appeals problem for the personnel agencies, an expensive procedure in itself. A person active in the personnel field recently wrote that "comprehensive objective-type tests that are now commonly used in modern public personnel recruitment can usually be relied upon to distinguish the superior from the inferior individuals in any large group, and the process of administering and rating such tests is far less time-consuming

than would be the case if the unassembled type of examination were used."

As far as can be determined this emphasis stems from the application to social work of an examination form considered generally reliable by psychologists and personnel experts. Evidence of its suitability to social work is, however, lacking. In its standards for merit system administration the Social Security Board indicates that there shall be a "practical" written test except where this may be inappropriate for certain technical or professional positions. The Board is now attempting to gather evidence on the success of this type of examination.

There can be no doubt that there are some valid reasons for the emphasis on the objective form of examination. It is less expensive; seems less open to differences of opinion and can be administered more quickly because much of the scoring, particularly where large numbers are involved, can be done by machine. It may also reduce opportunities for political maneuvering. At the same time these reasons need support through evidence that other forms, though possibly more expensive and time-consuming, are not selecting better people than this form.

The alleged utility of the objective test may prove relative to unfavorable conditions and practices within the personnel field which have put a high premium on certain examination objectives. The personnel agencies have had to handle the problem of examining for large numbers of new positions. It is probable that in the future both the number of examinations and the number of applicants to be examined for them will be greatly decreased and that therefore some of the advantages urged for the objective tests will lose their importance. In addition the setting of low requirements of education and experience or the elimination of such requirements for admission to examinations has transferred to the written examination the inappropriate burden of sifting out persons who might have been more economically excluded by a rating of education and experience.

The objective test is subject to real question because of the nature and content of social work practice which, because it is a practice, is not limited to factual knowledge for which the objective test examines. Modifications in the true-false test, such as asking for reasons for the answer given or relating the true-false questions to a case situation, have seemed to amount to little more than compromises. The results of multiple-choice questions are considered misleading because, as in true-false questions,

there is room for a large element of guess work and for a very simple deduction of the correct answer from the nature of the other choices offered.

It is said that this form is much more difficult to construct than others but this disadvantage is outweighed by ease of scoring. Development of this type of test involves technical knowledge of reliable testing methods and may be distorted crudely through catch questions and poor use of content by an unskilled examiner. A group of social workers had the experience of seeing questions which they formulated as suggestions for an examination turned into a violation of the original purpose not only through the use of questionable content but also through the offering of choices, in multiple-choice questions, which were not really choices, or were so phrased as to make it impossible for the examinee to be sure he was conveying his real intention, etc. This experience points up the need for exploring further the question of how much we need to know about the technical aspects of selection methods.

The Essay Question

The essay or discussion question is often excluded on general grounds of "reader unreliability," the influence of extraneous factors on the rater, such as the examinee's handwriting, the expense and time involved in grading the questions particularly where large numbers of candidates are to be examined, and difficulty in rating presentation and organization of material. This form seems to be used for supervisory and administrative positions more frequently than for such positions as case worker, field worker and investigator. It is believed to be a better test of breadth and depth of knowledge and of ability to organize ideas but to be unsound because no evaluation scheme can be set up which is independent of the scorer.

A problem for attention is that of formulating good essay questions and developing a professional consensus as to the best answers. Without the latter as a rating schedule, essay questions are subject not only to individual opinion but, even more important, to variations in that opinion which occur during the grading process. To guard against this, experienced graders often regrade the first group of papers they score. The setting up of a rating schedule should be, though it is not always considered so, an essential part of the process of formulating an examination question, the responsibility for both carried by the same group or individual.

Recently an Association member was asked to grade examination papers for two social work positions. All of the questions were essay type and broad in scope; several were ambiguous in nature. Her information about the duties of the positions was limited to the public announcement of the examination. She had not participated in the formulation of the questions and was given no rating sheet or any indication except the weights to be given to each question, of the kind of answer which would be acceptable. She had no group consensus on which to base her rating, although some of the questions obviously involved differences in social work philosophy about which the particular department concerned would have a distinctive opinion.

This person attempted to do a responsible, uniform job by developing her own rating sheet for each question after study of some of the answers and some informal consultation. The rating nevertheless represented her own opinion. She took what precautions she could by reviewing at the end the first papers she graded, but was extremely dissatisfied with the results and feels that although she can defend her own judgments, she cannot defend them as necessarily representing the best professional practice.

This kind of procedure is unfortunate not only because of the questions which might be raised in the individual situation, but more particularly because it reinforces the criticisms made of the reliability of the essay question. It is probable that a lessening of the pressures which encourage emphasis on the objective test may allow more freedom in experimentation with the essay form of examination.

Rating of Education and Experience

The assembled written examination, of whatever form, is ordinarily one part of the examination process which includes also the rating of education and experience and an oral examination. The rating of education and experience in the assembled examination is part of a general problem described under discussion of unassembled examinations. It is mentioned here because the problems are similar and yet often somewhat intensified because of a tendency either to omit this part of the process or to deal with it superficially and rely on the written and oral examinations.

This rating is usually done only for those applicants who have passed the written test. It consists of requests for letters of reference

from past employers, schools, and frequently personal friends, chiefly as verification of the education and experience rather than an evaluation of the candidate. In a few instances an actual investigation is made through personal contacts. The general belief is that this rating is nowhere being done satisfactorily and cannot be because of the factors described below, particularly a tendency to evaluate subjectively or on the basis of quantity alone. Acceptance of this difficulty as inherent really denies the usefulness of prerequisites and can result in an advance of the practice, such as found in Pennsylvania, which sets up no educational or experience requirements.

The Oral Examination

For some time there has been a general acceptance of the value of an oral examination as the final step in the selection process prior to certification and appointment, particularly for supervisory, administrative and so called "public relations" positions. Reasons for the acceptance have seemed to be that social work involves relationships with people, in which such factors as attitudes, personality, bearing, and poise, are of great importance and can be examined only through a personal interview. Increasingly Association members and chapters are being asked to serve on oral boards.

The oral examination is at an experimental stage in that more experience is needed to determine its distinctive role, what phases of knowledge and discipline it tests differently from other parts of an examination, whether it is now being used to test factors which more appropriately should be tested in other parts of the process and what is sound and effective procedure for this type of examination. It is under some question at present because evidence of reliability and validity is not available. The rating of an oral examination is a difficult problem in itself because of differences of opinion as to what is being tested. There is also a problem in determining effective composition for oral boards. Present practice reflects a tendency to judge personal attributes apart from their relevance to the job to be filled.

There is an apparent growing interest in the personnel field in the development of "scientific" personality and attitude tests which do not, as do oral examinations, depend on the examiner and thus represent the approval or disapproval of the observer rather than a test of "right or wrong." Such examinations as now exist are not considered satisfactory for merit systems.

The Unassembled Examination

The unassembled examination comprises the rating of education and experience as presented by the candidate in his application and supplemented by writings and exhibits such as publications and theses. This form of examination is used very little in social work except by the United States Civil Service Commission. It is usually supplemented with an oral examination prior to appointment.

A rating schedule is set up at the same time the examinations are announced. The schedule is tentative so that changes in weights, equivalents, etc., can be made to allow for consideration of education and experience not previously taken into account.

The rating of education, except for the question of equivalents, is less of a problem than that of rating experience. In the latter, the need for administrable criteria for the "approved social agency" is acute. Except as the agency's standing is indicated by membership in national functional organizations, there is no accrediting body for social agencies. At the present time the United States Civil Service Commission gives consideration to agency membership in a national functional organization or some other stamp of approval, such as membership in a council of social agencies, a community chest, or receipt of public subsidy. The Commission is working on this problem as present criteria are not felt to be satisfactory.

A point which is often not understood about the unassembled examination is that the rating is made not only on the kind and quantity of education and experience but on the applicant's own appraisal of his background and how he believes it qualifies him for the position. Thus a competent person whose experience may have been in an agency of questionable standing and who has profited considerably by that experience in trying to improve the standards of that agency, is not penalized in favor of the candidate whose experience has been in an approved agency and who may or may not have profited by his experience in a similar fashion. Another factor which is taken into account is the candidate's judgment in selection of references which would supply useful information.

The unassembled examination is considered effective and economical where the following conditions exist:

1. The position is of a technical or administrative nature requiring a rather

specific length and type of education and experience.

2. Where the number of positions and the required specialized education and experience combine to limit competition to a small number of candidates.
3. Where waiver of residence requirements creates a practical problem of giving written examinations to a few applicants in each of many and widely scattered localities.
4. Where a quantitative and qualitative appraisal of education and experience and exhibits can be relied on to obtain a reasonably exact ranking in order of over-all ability, i.e., where a written test is not deemed necessary to determine the relative qualifications of candidates.

The practice used by the United States Civil Service Commission in asking for description and appraisal of qualifications as well as a listing of quantity is believed to make it possible for competent examiners to appraise relative merits of candidates. This process is sometimes considered one of selecting the best three or four from among an already restricted group rather than selecting from a larger number. In such instances the best candidates are thought ordinarily to stand out very clearly.

Any use of the unassembled examination is subject to criticism on several counts, some of which relate to current problems in its use which need further attention rather than to any fundamental weakness. One of the arguments for this form has been that candidates for scientific, technical and professional jobs are unwilling to submit to a competitive examination and to be subjected to a written or oral interview on a comparative basis. This has tended to result in the belief that the unassembled examination is a blanketing-in rather than a really selective process and can easily be tampered with politically. This belief also stems from difficulties in setting up a sound rating system. Critics also say that it is not possible to make a reliable evaluation of education and experience on the basis of what the candidate says himself so that the rating becomes one of quantity rather than quality. It would seem that current efforts of the United States Civil Service Commission are moving away from the purely quantitative approach. There is also the belief that this type of examination, like the written examination, though in different ways, will not test personality, temperament and ability to get along with other

people, unless supplemented by an oral examination.

The tendency to reduce the use of the unassembled examination for positions of a technical or administrative nature on the assumption that the problems it presents are inherent and unlikely to be overcome needs to be offset by further study of both the possibilities and difficulties of this examination. The waiver of residence requirements for positions demanding special qualifications in education and experience calls for the use of

an examining device suitable to the necessity of selection from a few qualified candidates who may be at considerable distances both from one another and the examining center.

That this examination process is an expensive one probably cannot be questioned. Actual experience and the cost as compared with other forms may be better known when the report of a committee which has been studying the process in the United States Civil Service Commission is released. This report is expected soon.

Social Workers and the 1940 Census

IF the count of social workers in the forthcoming United States census is to be accurate, all social workers must be identified as such in the enumeration. This means that in reporting occupation the social worker must take pains to see that it is in terms that can and will be classified properly. The list of occupation titles to be included under the heading, *Social and Welfare Workers*, in the Census Bureau's 1940 Occupation Index is reproduced herewith.

This list will be used by the Census Bureau in informing its coders, who will prepare the reported data for tabulation, concerning the types of positions to be classified as social and welfare workers in the published census reports. No counts will be made of workers holding particular position titles. All social workers reporting their occupation to the census enumerators under any title in this list will be recorded as a social worker in the final tabulation. If a social worker has a title not included in this list, he should make clear to the enumerator that he holds a position in social work, either by reporting his occupation merely as "social worker" or by specifying the particular title and adding after it "social worker."

Careful precautions should be taken by the large number of social workers who will not be home either during the day or in the evening when the enumerator calls. They should leave at their residences the needed information concerning occupation. It is in fact equally desirable that they leave for the enumerator all of the information needed for the census. The plan of the Census Bureau provides that individual census slips shall be left by the enumerators to be filled out by persons for whom information cannot be obtained in any other way. Although these slips have not yet been printed, the most

important questions they will ask are indicated in the following column. These questions should be answered as of April 1st, preferably on the special individual census form, and left, sealed and marked as "Confidential," if desired, to be collected by the enumerator within the first two weeks of April. If by April 15th you have reason to think that you have not been enumerated at all, it would be well to notify the local census supervisor.

While the questions asked for the census are personal, social workers, more than many other persons, will recognize the need of compiling accurate information on the points covered, including age, marital status, employment or unemployment, and annual earnings. The accuracy of the national and local data on these questions is important for social workers, because the information is needed for the study of problems which social work confronts. Social workers, therefore, should be ready to cooperate fully in supplying the census information.

Assurance may be had that the data supplied for the census will be treated confidentially. The census law requires that only sworn census employees may see your statements and this law will be strictly observed from the time the information is entrusted to the enumerator.

There is a further reason for urging that social workers familiarize themselves with the census questions. In many instances, presumably, they will be able to aid in the census undertaking by explaining the purpose and nature of the census to others, particularly their clients, between now and the date of the enumeration. Increasing the popular understanding of the census can materially affect its accuracy and is a highly appropriate service for workers who are concerned with the improvement of social conditions.

Questions Which Should be Answered as of April 1, on an Individual Census Slip, by Persons Who Cannot be Interviewed by a Census Enumerator

- 1—Name in full
- 2—Address: street and no., city, state
- 3—Sex
- 4—Color or race
- 5—Age at last birthday
- 6—Marital status: single, married, widowed, divorced
- 7—Highest grade of school or college completed
- 8—Have you attended school or college since March 1, 1940?
- 9—Where were you born?
- 10—If foreign born: naturalized, first papers, alien, or citizen born abroad to American parents
- 11—Where did you reside on April 1, 1935?
Give city, county, and state
Were you on a farm?
- 12—Were you at work for pay or profit in either private or non-emergency government work during week, March 24–30?
(Include administrative employment on emergency programs as non-emergency work)
- 13—If not, were you working on or assigned to emergency government work (WPA, NYA, CCC, etc.) during that week?
- 14—If neither 12 nor 13 applies:
Were you seeking work?
Did you have a job or business?
Were you unable to work?
- 15—Number of hours worked during week, March 24–30? (Salaried workers should report hours actually at work in week)
- 16—If seeking work or assigned to public emergency work, number of weeks since last employed up to March 30
- 17—What is your occupation (type of position) or, if unemployed, what was your last occupation?
- 18—In what type of establishment (for social workers, what kind of social work agency) do you work, or, if unemployed, did you last work?
- 19—Are you, or, if unemployed, were you when last employed:
paid worker in private establishment?
paid worker, governmental?
self-employed?
- 20—Equivalent number of weeks worked (including vacations with pay) in 1939?
- 21—Amount of money wages or salary received in 1939?
- 22—Did you receive income (including maintenance) of \$50 or more in 1939 other than money wages or salary?

Census Bureau's List of Position Titles to be Included in the Category, Social and Welfare Workers, in the 1940 Census of Occupations

Activities director, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Admission worker, (any hospital, clinic, or health center)
 Agent, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Assistant director, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Assistant secretary, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Assistant secretary, Y.M.C.A. or Y.W.C.A.
 Assistant secretary, Y.M.H.A. or Y.W.H.A.
 Attendance officer, (any school)
 Boy Scout director
 Boy Scout executive
 Boys' or girls' worker, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Camp director (or manager), recreation or summer camp
 Case consultant, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Case supervisor, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Case work aide, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Case worker, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Case worker, hospital, clinic or health center
 Case worker, (public relief agency, except U. S.)
 Case worker, (public relief agency, U. S.)
 Case worker, Red Cross
 Community Chest official
 Community organization worker
 Cottage father or mother, (any children's institution)
 Counselor, private camp
 Court worker, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Crime prevention worker
 Department director, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Department secretary, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Department supervisor, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Director, Americanization work
 Director (department), (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Director, community center (work)
 Director, Girl Scouts
 Director, girls' camp
 Director, health education
 Director, playground
 Director, (public relief agency, except U. S.)
 Director, (public relief agency, U. S.)
 Director, recreation
 District director, (any relief agency)
 District secretary, (any relief agency)
 District supervisor, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Executive, Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts
 Executive secretary, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Executive secretary, (any health promotion agency)
 Field supervisor, (any health promotion agency)
 Field supervisor, (any welfare organization)
 Field worker, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Field worker, (any health promotion agency)
 General secretary, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Group leader or worker, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Head worker, social settlement
 Health education worker, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Home finder, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 House father, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 House mother, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Investigator, (any charitable or welfare agency)

Investigator, (any children's or family court)
 Juvenile officer, (city, county, State, or n.s.)
 Juvenile officer, U. S.
 Manager, Community Chest
 Medical social worker
 Officer (truant), school
 Parole agent or officer, State
 Parole agent or officer, U. S.
 Parole director or supervisor, State
 Parole director or supervisor, U. S.
 Placement secretary, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Play leader, city park or playground
 Playground director or worker
 Probation officer, (city, county, State, or n.s.)
 Probation officer, U. S.
 Protective worker, (any children's aid agency)
 Protective worker, (any immigrant aid agency)
 Psychiatric social worker
 Recreation director or leader
 Red Cross agent or worker
 Referee, juvenile court
 Research worker, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Scout executive, Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts
 Scout master, Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts
 Secretary (official), (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Secretary (official), boys' or girls' club
 Secretary (official), Red Cross
 Secretary (official), Y.M.C.A. or Y.W.C.A.
 Secretary (official), Y.M.H.A. or Y.W.H.A.
 Settlement worker, (any social settlement)
 Social service worker
 Social worker, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Social worker, (any hospital)
 Superintendent, (any children's institution)
 Superintendent, day nursery
 Supervisor, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Supervisor, playgrounds
 T.B. worker, (any health agency)
 Travelers Aid worker
 Truant officer, (any)
 Visiting teacher
 Visitor, (any charitable or welfare agency)
 Visitor, (public relief agency, except U. S.)
 Visitor, (public relief agency, U. S.)
 Welfare manager
 Welfare supervisor
 Welfare worker
 Y.M.C.A. official, (any)
 Y.M.H.A. official, (any)
 Y.W.C.A. official, (any)
 Y.W.H.A. official, (any)

Notes About Chapters

THE Inland Empire Group of the *Washington State Chapter* laid its program plans for this year early in the fall. At each of its closed meetings, several members give five minute reports entitled "News Plus" which are "highlights" from THE COMPASS and news of developments in the various areas covered by the Group. Every member is asked to send to the program committee information about any new developments and the Committee selects representatives to make the reports. This device was developed as one means of dealing with the wide geographic spread of the Group's membership and, according to the chairman of the Group, has been a real

aid in giving the members in this large territory a greater appreciation of the contributions made by all sections of that territory to a common knowledge that is needed in meeting the problems in practice.

THE *New York City Chapter* approved the statement on "recommendations on Employment Practices for New York City Social Agencies" which was formulated by its Committee on Local Employment Practices and has now been sent to a sample group of agencies for their consideration, comment, and indication of how these recommendations relate to their existing practices. Many agencies are already responding to the Statement. The Committee used the national Employment Practices Statement and material on known agency practices as a background for its work. The Statement includes recommendations on general principles believed basic and specific practices which agencies would adapt to their own settings. A panel discussion provided the way into chapter consideration of how to translate employment theory into employment practice. Out of these considerations a new committee under the Chapter's Division on Employment Practices has been set up, on Research in Employment Practices, whose assignment includes responsibility for analyzing agency replies to the Chapter's request for comment, recommending ways of using this material effectively and identifying subjects which need special study by this or other committees.

THE *St. Joseph Valley Chapter* has been active in the past months in attempting to stop misleading publicity in local newspapers about relief "chiselers," which was seemingly directed, without regard for actual facts, toward all clients who were taken off the rolls, even those who asked to be removed because of employment. The Chapter's resolution condemning this kind of publicity was published in the *South Bend Tribune*, the daily newspaper. Shortly thereafter the paper published a resolution passed by the advisory board of the Township Trustee commending the trustee for his efforts to eliminate those on relief not entitled to it; this was seen by the paper as an answer to the Chapter's action. Some months later a letter was run in "The Voice of the People" which questioned the Chapter's resolution and asked about the Association. A committee of the Chapter went to see the writer and in explaining the Association's concern, discovered he had been misinformed as to the Chapter's

action. The Chapter reports that there has been no subsequent disparaging publicity. Recently a reporter from the newspaper has been in touch with the Chapter to ask if it was making any recommendations regarding any phase of social work. The Chapter feels that this activity has not only helped in clearing up the question of "chiseling" but has established the Chapter as a force in the community.

THE Division on Employment Practices of the *Boston Chapter* has followed up the Chapter's work with the Boston Council of Social Agencies on studies of existing employment practices with a code of standards for evaluating those practices, which has been published as a booklet entitled "Agency and Worker." The Division studied the national Statement About Employment Practices and standards set up by other groups, organized sub-committees representing various fields of social work and consulted also with a group of clerical workers. The final report was discussed in two Chapter meetings and adopted by the membership. According to the foreword, three basic factors have been kept in mind: "the importance of adherence to standards which are professionally sound, the realization that the supply of funds for voluntarily supported social work is not unlimited and last, the most important, the fact that social agencies exist to give the best possible service to those in need." The report comprises a statement of the desirable standard, and where available, of the current practice in Boston agencies. Aspects of employment practices covered include: the employment contract, hours of work, opportunities for professional development, qualifications for new workers, salaries, leaves, staff participation. A limited number of copies of this report is available in the national office.

THE *Richmond, Cincinnati and Washtenaw County Chapters* have reported consideration soon after the 1939 Delegate Conference of the need for better chapter preparation to participate in the Delegate Conference. To establish one device for this better preparation, these chapters are planning appointment of their delegates early in the year so that the delegates may make all possible use of chapter activities during the year to orient themselves to chapter thinking and chapter problems which bear on future Delegate Conference discussions.

A POCKET size year book has been published by the *Southeast Texas Chapter* for the use of its members. It contains a list of chapter officers and committees for 1940, programs scheduled for regular meetings for the year and the names and addresses of members of the Chapter.

THE *Chicago Chapter* has voted to continue for another year its \$1.00 increase in dues, adopted originally in 1939 in order to establish a chapter office and employ an executive secretary. The Chapter now has an executive secretary, an office secretary and a chapter office, as reported in the November 1939 COMPASS.

White House Conference Reports

The White House Conference on Children in a Democracy discussed the preliminary report and agreed on the plans for a final version, and on plans for future action in support of a Conference conclusions. A full report of the Conference is to appear in the February Mid-Monthly Survey. Copies available at 112 East 19th Street, New York City (30 cents each—4 for \$1.00).

Meeting of Committee on Personnel Practices

The national Committee on Personnel Practices met in St. Louis on January 13th and 14th. Among the subjects which the Committee considered was that of the national Statement about Standard Employment Practices. Material was reviewed on the ways in which the Statement has been used since its adoption in 1937 and problems which have arisen as chapters, agencies and national organizations have worked on employment practices. This review comprised the basis for decisions regarding further plans for this year in connection with the Statement.

The Committee also discussed ways of working on evaluations of performance, methods of study of employment practices, problems in the examination process, methods of handling grievances and problems of agency practice and professional conduct which give rise to grievances, and other aspects of personnel practices which will receive particular attention this year.

The National Membership Committee

The National Membership Committee will have a special meeting in Chicago on February 3rd-4th to formulate further plans for study of problems of membership policy and requirements. Its agenda includes discussion and follow-up of reports received from chapters on their program interests and activities in relation to membership questions and on problems of professional performance and eligibility.

The Committee will also work out plans for carrying out a special assignment made by the National Board at its meeting of December 12th-13th. This special assignment calls for the organization of local committees to examine the problems which the present membership requirements present to social workers in such fields as public welfare, group work, community organization, and probation and parole. These local committees will act in a subcommittee capacity and be composed of members informed about the problems of their particular fields of practice.

Florence Sytz who has been chairman of the National Membership Committee since 1937-38 has resigned from that office because her other duties make it difficult for her to meet the demands of the Committee's present program. Lucia Clow of Milwaukee who has served as a member of the Committee since 1937-38 has accepted appointment as chairman to succeed Miss Sytz.

Nine Points on Interpretation of Social Work

In an annual report of its Committee on Interpretation, Harry Becker summarizes nine conclusions reached by the Nebraska Chapter in a meeting held in February 1939 which was planned by the Committee:

1. The emphasis in all interpretation should be on the presentation of the philosophy of social work.
2. It is social work and not social workers which should be interpreted.
3. Social work should be interpreted to a community on the basis of fundamental principles and not on the basis of the personality of the social worker.
4. The social work *problem* should be presented to the public, rather than the program.
5. The contribution of social work in meeting community social needs and problems should be stressed.

6. Publicity does not always mean interpretation. A social work job well done is the best method of interpreting the skills of social work.

7. Social workers should feed material to key community people in order that community leaders may understand and know the contribution of the profession of social work in meeting community problems.

8. Social workers must be sold on the job they are doing and the contribution social work has to make to that job.

9. Close contact and participation in AASW activities is an important responsibility of social workers if we are to develop a common understanding and have common goals.

The Rural Plus

(Continued from page 7)

roads and when it is the roads are often unfit for school-bus travel. Textbooks present another problem. Who is to pay for them when the state does not and the family cannot? When these problems go unsolved the isolation of the children continues.

Such isolation and the consequent lack of contact with others reduce incentives to maintain good standards of living and conduct. Workers have been shocked to learn that the wide-open spaces are not always conducive to wholesome, healthy living, but may even tend to increase alcoholism, incest, illegitimacy, and neglect of children. These are but some of the situations faced by the worker in the rural areas. If we consider some of these situations as the background or environment in which the rural worker functions we begin to see that although human experience may be fundamentally the same in city and country, case-work procedures and the way skills are utilized may be entirely different, though aims and techniques are the same.

THEORETICALLY, I presume, there are no fundamental differences in either the preparation for or the practice of social work, whatever the area. Practically, however, there are a great many differences, many of which, if not all, center in the personality and qualifications of the worker practicing her profession in rural areas. We find that much depends upon her ability to relate and adapt her professional training to the realities of a rural area with its lack of resources, com-

munity demands and expectations, limitations and adjustments in personal life, responsibilities for community leadership and organization, and with very limited and spotty supervision.

One outstanding difference is in the personal relation of the worker to the community. Her personal life is more readily scrutinized by neighbors and therefore her interests may tend to be restricted to those that are acceptable to the group. For example, such little details as what hangs on one's clothesline, or a window lighted past midnight, or a car parked in the dooryard all incite comment and, if unexplained, gossip for miles around. This decreased privacy demands that one live circumspectly. In a setting where people are used to being neighborly and to know about each others' personal affairs the reticence of a person not accustomed to this manner of behavior may be interpreted as high-hat and unfriendly. Nor can the rural worker divorce her life from the lives of her clients after office hours. It is impossible for her to be unavailable and anonymous in her personal life. Her associates, her recreation, her church attendance are inextricably linked with those of her clients.

A typical trait of speech, dress, manner, conduct is more conspicuous in a rural setting than in an urban one. Gross deviations as typified by odd cults or beliefs, which may be not only tolerated but encouraged by urbanites, are seldom tolerated in rural areas. Such traits may seem to rural folk to indicate weakness, and such weakness cannot be borne by those whose very survival depends upon independent strength and resourcefulness; consequently they are intolerant of deviation from the pattern to which they are accustomed. The lives of rural people are more closely interwoven than are the lives of people in larger areas. In *The Grapes of Wrath* John Steinbeck says, "A sick child threw despair into the hearts of 20 families—a birth kept a hundred people quiet and awestruck through the night and filled with birth-joy in the morning."

The tempo of living is also different in rural and urban communities. Rural people are, in general, less accustomed to directness and speed in human affairs than are city people. What may be reasonable expeditiousness in the city may cause real antagonism and lack of cooperation in the country. Traveling distance also modifies a worker's ability to plan her work. In planning home visits consideration must be given to planting

and harvesting seasons, times when chores are necessary, market days, early hours of rising and retiring. Writing for an appointment is so far from the usual procedure that it may seriously hamper the ease of establishing a satisfactory relationship.

TO complicate matters for the worker, not all state and local welfare departments operate on the same basis, though all have some common denominators of practice and function. Certain administrative problems concerned with the alignment of a division of child welfare in the general program and its relation to other services are evident. The proper relation of the work of a child-welfare division to the work of other divisions in a department of public welfare is of basic importance if duplication of effort and unnecessary confusion for both workers and clients are to be eliminated. To maintain sound structural organization it is essential, of course, to obtain well-qualified persons for subexecutives and to have clearly defined responsibilities freely delegated to them. Patterns of administrative and supervisory control vary in different states according to the equipment and security of the executives, the realities of the local situation, and the attitudes, size, and capacity of the staffs. Many states have been unable to provide adequately for their handicapped groups, so that child-care institutions have been forced to carry a load of feeble-minded children for which they were not equipped and the development of their programs has been unfairly hampered. Unlicensed foster homes and boarding homes have continued to operate without state supervision or guidance. When wise control is lacking, adoption practices have been based on expediency and sentiment far more than on intelligent and sympathetic recognition of the child's potentialities and of the rights of parents and adoptive parents. State correctional schools have not in every state been placed under the jurisdiction of the department administering child-welfare programs. The processes of admission and parole have not always been used as a means of protection for children. Such practices relating to the development of a children's program naturally arrest the attention of the rural child-welfare worker.

There are varied interpretations in state departments of responsibility in the field of child welfare. Differences in heritage and development of child-welfare programs in various states are, of course, influenced by the training, philosophy, and experience of the leaders, and, in some states, by their

ability to see child welfare in its true perspective and to modify in old, established programs the outworn state-wide methods. One of the points of greatest confusion seems to be in regard to what should be expected when a "trained" worker appears on the scene. In some cases, frankly, too much has been expected. After all, a child-welfare worker is a human being. In some states there is the confident report that certain tasks now successfully accomplished could not have been done without the trained worker. Some states enthusiastically grant leave to workers to secure additional training; other states grant leave without enthusiasm and with pessimism poorly concealed; and a few states do not grant educational leave.

What should constitute the training of the child-welfare worker in the rural area? Should she have, in addition to a broad background of generic case work, specialized courses in child welfare, courses in rural case work and field work in rural area? Does the worker need to know and blend basic case-work skills and specialized skills? How much is generic? What are the basic skills? What are the specialized skills? Has there been a tendency toward overemphasizing certain specializations hitherto considered prerogatives in certain fields? Although there may be distinct areas of service requiring certain emphasis, may each be based on some adaptation of general principles?

Opinions differ. It is, however, generally conceded that everyone dealing professionally with human beings should be trained along two broad lines: (1) the acquisition of professional knowledge and (2) the acquisition and development of working skills. It is this second aspect of training which offers the greatest challenge and with which we are now concerned. How can schools of social work prepare their students to give services required of the child-welfare worker in a rural area?

Observations indicate that the child-welfare worker must have an inexhaustible variety of working skills—and that the words "inexhaustible variety" are not an overstatement will be evident shortly. The rural child-welfare worker cannot operate successfully on the "precious" or "idealist" theory alone but must face the jobs in terms of realities of local situations and attitudes. There is need for infiltration, during the training period, of a philosophy which will help in the actual practice of case work.

Whether the child-welfare worker should be attempting to perform the wide variety of tasks given to her in rural areas is debatable.

For instance, rural child-welfare workers are often placed directly from schools of social work with little or no previous experience, and although well trained in social case work with children have had little or no supervisory or administrative responsibility or certainly no experience in community organization. They may be employed in counties under directors of public welfare who have had no professional training. Frequently there is not a case supervisor in these counties and although the state staff tries to give some supervision the very nature of the program makes this supervision sporadic and often of a general nature. The child-welfare worker must carry a load of child-welfare problems, act as consultant to the other workers in the office when cases involving children arise, develop an awareness in the community of needs in the field of child welfare, and give assistance in planning to meet these needs. It is sometimes necessary for a rural child-welfare worker to assume direction of a county office. From this it can be seen that training of a narrow technical nature alone will not be adequate. It is, of course, necessary that courses in economics, political science, sociology, and psychology be taken, preferably as undergraduate work. We take it for granted that all child-welfare workers should have the necessary basic social-work courses, including family case work, child-welfare problems, medical and psychiatric information, public-welfare administration, community organization, research and statistics, in addition to field work in family and child-welfare agencies. Other essentials are courses in social legislation, social insurance, and taxation, and courses which give historic approach to social problems, public assistance, and public-welfare administration. For rural child-welfare workers to have courses in community organization and group work is especially desirable. Also many problems arise which are closely related to our land policies and too many social workers are unaware of them. It would be helpful to know something of the agricultural program of the Federal Government (feed and seed loans, soil conservation, and so forth).

The sum of essential knowledge and skills seems already to have reached a staggering total. It would not be surprising if at this point we decided that the rural child-welfare worker were more than a human being—for the list is not yet ended.

There are certain facts about local government that it is necessary for the worker to know. In the United States the primary

responsibility for child care and child protection rests upon the state governments. Within the states it rests on local governments—cities, counties, and towns. Therefore, knowledge of the organization and functioning of local government is prerequisite.

County powers and functions are not uniform in all the states, and the general importance of the county varies considerably. Parishes in Louisiana have such powers as may be prescribed by law. In New England the town remains the primary unit of local government. Some state constitutions make general grants of power to counties. Thus the functions and powers exercised by various local units of government are manifold. There is great dissimilarity as to which of these manifold functions assumes the most importance. It is essential for the worker to know these powers and functions and to have a working knowledge of the duties of local officials.

Just as county functions vary from state to state, so county importance varies within the state. The importance of the county as an election unit may be determined by the position of the county committee in the party organization and by the campaign activities centered there.

If the child-welfare worker knows where the county revenues come from and how and for what they are spent she will probably have a more sympathetic understanding of the problems of the local officials. Such sympathy is very apt to work both ways: It is possible, at least, that the county official may listen with intelligent appreciation of another's difficulties, but it is certain that a sympathetic relationship will never exist if the worker has the idea that all county officials are either rogues or numskulls.

In this connection it is also necessary for the child-welfare worker to recognize the inherent differences among human beings in various sections of the country in regard to the spending of money. In some areas a topography that restricted communication and transportation imposed upon early settlers a stern economy that has been inherited by their descendants. In other sections, where land was fertile, growing conditions favorable, and markets accessible, there was less need for frugality, and this attitude exists today. In some rural areas actual cash transactions are rare, the mode of exchange being limited almost entirely to commodities. The attitude toward money in any of these communities is one aspect of what may be called

a rural philosophy of life—a philosophy with which the worker should acquaint herself along with knowledge of the special crops, the tools, the local vocabulary, the taboos, and the honored customs of the community in which she is placed. This is really not so alarming as it must seem in such tabulated form. Much of the "essential information" listed here an intelligent observer would take pleasure in discovering, aside from its usefulness "in the job."

A broad knowledge of the technique, methods, and principles of public-welfare administration is another of the basic needs of the welfare worker. History of public-welfare administration, though essential, does not provide skills for meeting practical, everyday administrative problems in the field of public welfare. It is unfortunate that the real significance of such courses seems to have passed lightly over the heads of many workers, leaving them in a state of confusion when faced with actual administrative problems. The worker should have not only theoretical but concrete knowledge of administration at different levels; so that she could, if need be, set up an office and know how to go about initiating a staff into its work, installing a simple but usable filing system, and preparing a budget. She should recognize the duties of and need for auditors and be thoroughly familiar with administrative lines.

There are certain legal aspects of the work which should be known. What are the legal resources? How can they be used? What are the rights of the child? His safeguards? What procedures are necessary in drafting bills and getting laws passed? If the worker knows the answers to these questions, the opportunity for service is broadened.

It has already been noted that the worker must have adequate understanding of family problems as a whole as background for any consideration of the problems of the child. Closely related to these family problems are the questions of fair wages, unemployment insurance, medical care, public health, sanitation, and such other public matters as housing and the general features of a housing project.

ZONA GALE has said that the unique power of the artist is that he can discern the hidden aspect of idea that lies back of every being, every thing, every occasion. The children's worker needs to be sensitively endowed with insight which penetrates motives, which sees below the lights and shadows to the

stark facts of daily life. And since she is always dealing with phenomena which are at least partially abstract and therefore nebulous, she must expect criticism from laymen. Those who are most critical are usually unaware of the complexity and subtlety of work with human beings. But one of their criticisms may be just. It is possible that welfare workers do quibble over some trivial matters, when by yielding a relatively unimportant point they might win cooperation for a larger task. This quibbling over the relatively unimportant may arise from the fact that the social worker has never before played a part in so great a public-welfare program.

It seems probable that participation of social workers in public service will continue to expand and develop, although the expansion will doubtless be more gradual than it has been in the past five years. County and rural development will require workers more broadly trained in the content of social work, including family and child care, and in the administration of public welfare.

From statements of workers in different sections of the United States it appears that often they find it difficult to apply their training to specific situations and to reduce their professional vocabulary to ordinary terms easily understood. If the worker can discuss human problems only in technical language she will be misunderstood, ridiculed, and shut out by her rural neighbors, who are apt to call a spade a spade, with simplicity not sophistication. Frequently the children's worker who goes into a rural area and meets a "real" situation instead of the "ideal" she has imagined is confused and disheartened. This results in revolt either against the job—"This isn't really social work"—or against the training received as preparation for the job. Because of the frustration resulting from a feeling of inadequacy, the worker may heartily endorse Josh Billings in saying, "Ignorance ain't so much not knowin' as knowin' such a lot that ain't so."

The rapid increase in demand for trained personnel in the field of child welfare has resulted in the overcrowding of schools of social work, and unless there has been an increased budget providing for additional teaching staff the schools have faced a very difficult problem. Many of the applicants seeking admission came into the social work field with no preparation other than their interest in the work and their need for employment. After a brief period of employment they are seeking education to perform

service, and the schools find themselves somewhat in accord with the sentiments of the elderly man who when asked whether anything one got out of a lecture was worth the admission price of a dollar replied, "It all depends on what you take with you to get it in."

It is necessary to give thoughtful consideration to possibilities for vocational guidance and counseling of undergraduate students who wish to be trained for state or county positions in child-welfare work. Schools of social work may give the most carefully planned and ably supervised training in basic concepts, philosophies, and principles and find there are restrictions imposed by the worker's own limitations, personal life experiences, philosophy, interests, and tastes.

Workers going into areas similar to those mentioned must be able to cope with economic and environmental situations. They must have the patience required for slow progress and be able to create confidence in their capabilities. They must have initiative and imagination, vision and discernment, be able to capitalize on any constructive possibilities in the situation, and have those qualities of personality that enable one to work alone, accepting the entire responsibility of a situation because there is no one with whom it can be shared.

The social work task is not yet clearly defined. Social problems and methods for meeting these problems have changed so rapidly that interpreting them for teaching purposes as they existed even five years ago is completely inadequate. However, only from a proper evaluation of the past can we construct the future, and it seems entirely possible, under the guidance of instructors thoroughly familiar with the field in which students find employment, to include the knowledge so essential for sound practice in the content of courses now given.

If workers could be given a period of protected experience, similar to internship, between the school of social work and full responsibility for a job some of the problems arising in the field of social work practice might be eliminated.

It is inevitable and desirable that new techniques be developed, some old ones discarded, and newer definitions of social work sought. What new philosophy and methods will emerge cannot be predicted; however, it is reasonable to assume that the entire field of social work training and practice will be enriched by our present experiences.